How Official Media Can Use Social Media for Urban Marketing
——Take the Shenzhen Health Care Commission as an Example

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ABSTRACT

The economy's entry into globalisation has radically nurtured global competition between cities being a factor for business success, which has made it necessary for corporates to draw up their own marketing strategies for long-term development through innovation and systematic planning. The same applies to city branding through urban marketing to gain more economic benefits and space for development. In urban marketing, the official media plays the most important role on behalf of the government. This paper analyses how official media carries out urban marketing through social media platform for brand image through case study of the Shenzhen Health Care Commission.

Keywords: urban marketing, official media, social media, government marketing, Shenzhen

1.INTRODUCTION

In the era of economic globalisation, the meaning of space is being interpreted in a new way as global capital flows across borders continue to increase and national economic systems become increasingly open. Cities, on the other hand, are the main vehicle for modern economic development and are the political, economic and cultural centres of the region. In order to attract capital, the fierce competition between cities is reflected in all aspects of policy, capital, land, talent and technology. [23]

More and more local governments are turning to city marketing as a major means of city competition, which is closely related to city competitiveness, and the government plays a decisive and guiding role among multiple stakeholders in the city marketing process (including businesses, citizens, and NGOs). The official media, on the other hand, represents the party and the government's position, and the official media has recently expanded and diversified its propaganda methods from traditional media to marketing tools. As a result, whether cities can compete will be determined by how the official media uses internet marketing tools, such as government marketing and city marketing via social media.

This paper aims to tackle the discussion on successful city marketing through a case study of Shenzhen Health Care Commission as an in-depth analysis for defining urban marketing and evaluate the importance of government and official media in urban marketing, and their roles in demonstrating a city's characteristics and promoting its image through social media.

2.UNDERSTANDING OF 'URBAN MARKETING'

2.1 Definition of City Image

City image is the outward artistic expression of the inner characteristics of a city, reflecting the overall quality, taste and culture of the city. Similar to commodity branding image, which utilizes package design, advertisement, and other marketing strategies for attracting more potential consumers, city image, likely, aims to attract external resources and promote the city's economic development.[1]

2.2 Definition of Urban marketing

Not only can cities use the principles of marketing to promote themselves like businesses, but urban marketing has become one of the key features of the strategic transformation of urban development strategies. The concept of urban marketing was originally derived from Kotler's 'regional marketing'. He believed that regional marketing is the planning and design of a city to meet the needs of its target market. [2]

Ni Pengfei believes that urban marketing is the process of equating a city with a business, treating the future development plan of the city as the marketing product of the city, analyzing the internal and external environment of the city, identifying its strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats in global competition, identifying the potential audience market of the city, and creating, packaging and selling for the audience target. [3].

Liu Yanping and Zhao Xia argue that Kotler's definition is too simplistic and fails to effectively cover the characteristics of urban marketing in East Asia and fully reveal the difference between urban marketing and corporate marketing. They define urban marketing as a series of strategic planning and concerted actions to meet the needs and expectations of the city's target markets (citizens, tourists, investors, enterprises and export markets, etc.), and as a management philosophy to enhance the city's ability to provide public value and achieve sustainable and harmonious development. [4]

2.3 The importance of urban marketing and city branding

Kotler argues that the effects of external competition and technological progress, as well as the internal cyclical cycles of economic growth and decline, often lead to urban development dilemmas. In order to strengthen the ability of cities to respond to market changes, cities must change their original development philosophy and turn to a new approach to urban management - urban marketing. [2]

Urban marketing is closely linked to city competitiveness. Urban marketing can provide cities with a reasonable positioning in the process of competitive interaction, highlighting characteristics so as to attract target groups, and create a competitive environment for city development for cities facing development difficulties, and find the vitality to get out of the difficulties and revitalize economic development. [5].

Urban marketing usually adopts the branding strategy in marketing to create a city brand. The city brand is a comprehensive impression and psychological perception of the city's unique personality by city consumers, a kind of identification of the city, is a special display of the city's unique advantages. [6]

From the China Urban marketing Development Report (2020), we know that the top ten cities in the China City Brand Development Index (CBDI) ranking are: Beijing, Shanghai, Hangzhou, Shenzhen, Chengdu, Guangzhou, Chongqing, Hong Kong, Wuhan and Nanjing in order. Under the influence of the epidemic, the CBDI index of the 288 cities included in the assessment in 2020 has fallen back, with an average CBDI value of 0.295, down about 4% year-on-year, but the top 10 cities ranked only 2.9% year-on-year, which indicates that the

resilience of city brand value has a supportive effect on city development. [7]

2.4 How to do urban marketing abroad

According to a survey of 25 cities in 18 countries conducted by the European Coalition of Cities in 2005, seven models of urban marketing were identified as frequently used, with trade fairs being the most frequently used (71%), followed by business forums (45%), media campaigns (45%), cultural and sporting events (40%), internet campaigns (35%), targeted direct marketing (15%), road shows and study tours (15 per cent). [8]

London's approach to urban marketing is highlighted by the Great London Authority Act, which legislates that one of the statutory responsibilities of the Mayor of Greater London is to promote and develop the city's image and tourism, and by the establishment of an integrated coordination mechanism to ensure the efficiency of the Mayor's central marketing efforts. [8]

In Germany, cities have adopted a corporate approach such as the BerlinPartner GmbH and the Marketing Leipzig GmbH, which are responsible for the marketing of the city's brand. The GmbH means that they are all limited companies. [8]

The experience of the Los Angeles government is to create public platforms to connect socially beneficial organizations and non-governmental organizations. The city has been able to collaborate with over 1,700 arts and cultural organizations through a new platform, the ExperienceLA website. Any organization or business can apply to become a partner completely free of charge but is required to use the Experience LA logo on their public website or other publicly published materials to promote Los Angeles. [8]

2.5 Domestic urban marketing success stories

Known as the ancient capital of the world civilization, Xi'an has a long history of urban culture and urban landscape. However, in the face of fierce global competition, the formerly prosperous metropolitan city is also feeling the pressure of competition from cities at home and abroad. In order to escape the threats of the continued deterioration of the urban ecological environment and the discontinuity of the urban culture, Xi'an has launched a series of urban marketing campaigns to enhance the comprehensive competitive strength of the city and to recreate the thriving city of Xi'an, whose experiences are summarized as follows.

(1) Packaging of the original city heritage. Xi'an has fully explored the tourism and publicity value of the Terracotta Warriors and Horses of the First Qin Emperor, a heritage of world civilization, and actively declared it a World Heritage Site. After the Terracotta Warriors'

inscription was successful, a variety of thematic activities and events were launched to promote the Terracotta Warriors as the city's calling card, leaving a deep impression on people around the world and promoting the image of the ancient city of Xi'an.

(2) Innovative tourism destination products. Following the Terracotta Warriors and Horses, a symbol of Xi'an's history, Xi'an has gone beyond the promotion of its historical heritage to create new destination products, drawing on the unique history and culture of the ancient city. -The "Grand Tang Furong Garden".   As the first theme park to showcase the culture of the Tang Dynasty in all its dimensions, it has become a new tourism coordinate and destination for the city of Xi'an.

2.6 Problems with domestic urban marketing

China's urban marketing activities have only been developed for more than 20 years since its inception. Compared with the West, which has been developed for a century, China is still in its primary stages for urban marketing activities, dealing with the following main problems.

(1) Disorganized planning across departments. At present, there is no special unit regarding urban marketing of the city as a whole. Instead, marketing strategies are taken respectively by individual relevant departments. The lack of logical communication across departments, as well as unified layout and interface in urban marketing activities usually result in duplication of investment in marketing activities.

(2) Lack of unified and efficient professional institutions. The majority of professional government officials do not specialize in marketing, and there are no professional people specifically regulating such developments in China. Unclear positioning is a problem for most cities in China when it comes to marketing their cities. For a city to be successful in this spectrum, it must first have a clear direction of approach, such as the 'Garden City' of Singapore, the 'World City of Asia' of Hong Kong, these cities have employed professionals and set up specializing departments for ensuring effective conducting of urban marketing strategies. [9]

(3) Lack of marketing effectiveness evaluation. Urban marketing is diversified, and its activities have special characteristics. The government, as a dominant in the marketing subject, and the city itself, as the product of urban marketing, determine the specificity of marketing activities. The effectiveness of these marketing tools, the extent to which they have increased the number of visitors to the city and the amount of foreign capital inflows, are not based on statistics from the relevant authorities, nor is there a set of evaluation methods and systems to assess the efficiency of the marketing tools, and therefore the effectiveness of the marketing tools cannot be evaluated. [9]

3.The role of government in urban marketing

According to Kotler's urban marketing theory and polycentric governance theory, the main marketing body of a city is the government. Regardless of its presence or ability, it is still the leader of all public activities. Therefore, in the process of urban marketing, the government plays a decisive and directional role among multiple stakeholders (including enterprises, citizens and NGOs). This is determined by the nature of the publicity, and the public policy value orientation that urban marketing embodies. The government, as the representative of public interest, also has the resources and advantages of macro-control. It is responsible for many important tasks of the city, such as economic development, infrastructure construction, urban layout planning, etc., and also provides the citizens with a good living environment such as education, employment, medical care and transportation. Once again, the process of urban marketing reflects the value orientation of public policy, and is the result of a game of interests among all stakeholders. It is necessary for the government to take the lead and coordinate the efforts of all parties for reaching consensus, and making trade-offs on the value of public policy. As globalized economic competition intensifies, governments must take on the responsibility of marketing their cities, displaying them in the global market and improving their overall strength. [10]

4.The role of social official media in urban marketing

4.1 The official media's position

Official media are also known as mainstream media, as defined by Zhang Shouying, director of the News Research Centre of the People's Daily. Mainstream media and newspapers mainly promote mainstream values, propagate the policies of the Party and the government, and spread the core socialist values in terms of national or party and political values. [11]

4.2 Changes in the official media

Although the Communist Party had a 'press spokesman' as early as the war, the real sense of a 'press release system' in the new China has not commenced until the 20th century. It did not begin to emerge until the 1980s. In March 1983, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs took the lead in establishing the spokesperson system. A press spokesperson was established and press conferences were held. During this period, however, the policy information released at these conferences was rather limited, and the manner in which they were delivered was more likely to be the speaker's own words, with answers to questions on topics other than those specified often being "no comments". [12]

The SARS incident in 2003 fully exposed the shortcomings of China's government press releases, and started the historical process of establishing and improving China's policy information response system. Since then, China has established a graded warning mechanism for public emergencies, with detailed regulations on the channels, methods and timing of information dissemination. In terms of developing the concept of information response, governments at all levels have become much more aware of releasing policy information in a timely and objective manner in the face of emergencies and major policy issues. For example, after the Wenchuan earthquake in 2008, the Information Office of the State Council and the Sichuan Provincial Government held more than 30 press conferences to release information on the disaster area and inform about relief arrangements in a timely manner. [12]

In terms of policy construction channels, the emergence of new media, such as the Internet, Weibo, and WeChat, has made government policy information response channels more diversified. Some scholars have also found that government on Weibo will generally respond to anything that the public is "on the fence" about. In terms of the types of policy information disseminated, policy information released by the government is not only "linearly disseminated" through the bureaucracy (i.e., top-down dissemination through meetings, documents, propaganda, etc.), but also through press conferences or through television, radio, the internet and other media, targeting all potential policy audiences. "waveform messaging". [12]

4.3 Official media and social media

The Internet and information technology are impacting the structure and form of various industries, and there is a trend of Internalization, information technology and data in a variety of industries. The city's publicity methods have extended from traditional print advertisements and TV commercials to the current means of promotion such as micro-films and micro-blogs, and the means of marketing has developed towards diversification, with the internet and information showing momentum to dominate the future.

According to the 2020 People's Daily-Government Index Weibo Influence Report, as of December 2020, 140,837 microblogs of government agencies have been certified by the Sina Weibo platform, and all 31 provinces (autonomous regions and municipalities) in China have opened Weibo accounts of government agencies. [13]

WeChat, a universal mobile communication tool, has achieved large coverage of domestic mobile internet users, with more than one billion people logged in 2019. In order to increase public approachability and strengthen the communication between the government and its people for expanding service channels, the government

has actively promoted the government affairs public websites with the help of new media platforms, which have developed rapidly. According to the 2015 National Government New Media Report, the number of WeChat official accounts opened for government affairs and people's livelihood in China has exceeded 83,000, with 31 provincial and administrative regions and 334 prefecture-level administrative regions having opened. [14] As of March 2020, the scale of online government service users in China reached 694 million, up 76.3% from the end of 2018, accounting for 76.8% of Internet users as a whole, and there is still huge room for growth. According to statistics, the Government's official WeChat page has leapt to the first place in the usage rate of various online government services, especially during the epidemic in the first half of 2020. Government WeChat has provided integrated online processing services for the general public, greatly improving business processing efficiency and repositioning the government in innovative management initiatives and optimizing government services. [15]

As of June 2020, more than 25,000 Tiktok registrations have been made by government departments of all levels along with 31 provinces, that ushered governmental propaganda in a new approach with the empowerment of short videos on the platform. Examples like "China Chang'an" (Central Committee of Political and Legal Affairs) and "Beijing SWAT" (Beijing Public Security Bureau's Anti-Terror and Special Police Headquarters) have evidenced success of the emergence of official accounts for fostering efficient communication with the general public. [16]

4.4 Importance of Social Media in Urban marketing

According to the 49th Statistical Report on the Development Status of the Internet in China released by China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC), as of December 2021, the size of China's Internet users reached 1.032 billion, an increase of 42.96 million from December 2020, and the Internet penetration rate reached 73.0%. The Report shows that the Internet usage behavior of China's Internet users presents new characteristics: First, the per capita length of Internet access has maintained growth. As of December 2021, the per capita weekly Internet access hours of Chinese Internet users reached 28.5 hours, an increase of 2.3 hours compared with December 2020, with the Internet deeply integrated into people's daily lives. Second, the use of Internet terminal devices has become more diversified. As of December 2021, the proportion of Chinese Internet users using mobile phones to access the Internet reached 99.7%, with mobile phones still being the most important device for accessing the Internet; the proportions of Internet users using desktop computers, notebook computers, TVs and tablet computers to access the Internet were 35.0%,

33.0%, 28.1% and 27.4% respectively. [17] This data shows that in the Internet era, cities wanting to gain an affinity and attractive city image must make full use of a variety of marketing tools for promotion, and pay attention to the role of new media in order to achieve optimal urban marketing and promotion results.

The government used to rely on more traditional forms of communications such a television and outdoor billboards for one-sided communication, and there used to be a lack of mature use of media for establishing connection between official parties and the public, that resulted in unstable and unsafe interactive feedbacks. Whilst the emergence of the new government media has made it possible for building cohesion between parties and attract its citizens attention. The emergence of social media for government has provided a powerful support. Government departments have established a communication channel with users by using social media to push out information on lifestyle services and urban planning to all interested users, effectively promoting the city's image, while users often resonate with the information after reading it and forward it to their WeChat Moments, further expanding the scope of dissemination of the city's image.

5.How the Shenzhen Health Care Commission markets the city

The Shenzhen Health Care Commission, the government department in charge of health and hygiene in Shenzhen, whose responsibilities have nothing to do with urban marketing, has inadvertently become a representative of Shenzhen's official media due to its popularity on social media, and has accidentally taken on the function of urban marketing and city branding.

5.1 About Shenzhen Health Care Commission

As an official public number, "Shenzhen Health Care Commission" is regarded as a "clear stream" of national government propaganda, sometimes warm, sometimes naughty, sometimes serious, and every year there are trending topics on Weibo. From the 2018 short video "Playful Female Nurse" out of the circle, harvesting 50 million traffic, to the recently created "Thank you, Chinese Doctor! video, the number of hits across the network exceeded 100 million.

According to the Shenzhen Special Zone Daily, the results of the seventh national census in Shenzhen show that the city's resident population is 17,560,100. [18] Yet the Shenzhen Health Care Commission's WeChat official account has 17 million followers, and almost every blog post has "100,000+"readers, with the highest single reading reaching 7.73 million, an achievement that is a leader not only in the field of government but also in the country's WeChat official accounts. [19]Self-media author Brotherkai said that among his WeChat friends,

only 28 were in Shenzhen, but 200 were following the Shenzhen Health Care Commission, and only 28 of those 200 were following the Health Care Commission in their location. [20]

Besides, according to the WeChat communication index ranking of national government public websites in July 2021, People's Daily, as the Party's organ, topped the list with a WeChat communication index of 2179.39; Shenzhen Municipal Health Planning Commission ranked 14th with a communication index of 1758.52, ranking first among prefectural and municipal departments. [21]

On 13 November 2021, the 10th World Young Scientist Pineapple Science Award was announced and the Shenzhen Health Care Commission received the Pineapple ME Award, which is established to reward individuals or organizations that have made outstanding contributions to science communication. [22]

From September 2015, when the "Shenzhen Health Care Commission" opened its doors, it has become Shenzhen's calling card in just seven years, so to speak.

5.2 Let the professionals do the professional thing

The Shenzhen Health Care Commission seized the opportunity of new media for tackling government affairs. After a period of outsourcing, in July 2016, Wang Ling, the head of the publicity and education department of the Shenzhen Health Care Commission, recruited the first post-85 writer from the city's hospitals and, with the support of his superiors, began to set up his own content production team. Subsequently, by adopting a market-based hiring approach, the Shenzhen Health Care Commission has poached more post-90s and established a six-member content team, including writers, editors, designers and creative planners, which has been operating completely independently on its own team since 2018. "Strong sense of the internet", "big brain" and "good writing" are the necessary "hardcore" qualities of the team members, most of whom Most of them have a background in media, either as journalists or as media interns.

The leaders of the Shenzhen Health Care Commission are respectful of the profession, pragmatic, open-minded and tolerant, giving the team enough space to allow the "brainy" editors to create purely and boldly fly their inspiration.

As mentioned earlier, some of our cities have problems with urban marketing, and the Shenzhen Health Care Commission happens to have a team with a professional background in media and marketing, along with the full support of government leaders and the data inventory provided by social media platforms that allows them to review each tweet in a timely manner, hence the

result of today's unintentional success.

5.3 Using user thinking for medical science

The team took the approach of understanding people's hearts and minds: that is, gaining insight into user groups, and finding their interests, excitement, and resonance points for its execution. They do not focus on "leadership only", but on the general public, not on B (Bureau) and A (ego), but on C (customer). The public has always come first before the governmental parties for ensuring the resonance of its contents to its audience.

The team has also played the role of a translator in tweets for explaining professional medical terminologies from the Health Care Commission to the general public, offering a sense of hospitality through governmental marketing.

The team's emoji packs and cover images are now hugely popular across the country. These content productions are both imaginative and expressive in communication. Visiting the Shenzhen Health Care Commission's WeChat official account every day has become a habit and a hobby for many people, which makes it an unintentionally effective channel for unblocking information.

Being a trendsetter: the form of the content follows the market and changes according to the preferences of young people. With the decline of WeChat, the Shenzhen Health Care Commission has kept up with the times, and has been stationed on both bilibili and TIKTOK, and its content has evolved from graphics to comics, short videos and creative products.

5.4 Conclusion about Unintentional urban marketing

5.4.1 Fun with the Citizens

The Shenzhen Health Commission calls itself "Shen Xiao Wei" on social media platforms, using "bitter fighter"," Optimistic Dry Rice Man"," and" Wacky Hipster" as their own persona. As Shenzhen is the youngest city in China, with an average age of 34 years old, which makes it possible for the " Shen Xiao Wei ", which focuses on the post-90s style, to quickly gain popularity and grow through the support and interaction of its fans, creating an interesting soul for each other.

Government propagandas have been styled in an old-fashioned manner while Shenzhen has a relatively young population. With linear approaches of government information distribution that does not meet the communication properties and reading habits of the Shenzhen citizen group, effects of official communication could result in being dubious. For Shenzhen Health Commission, most of the headers are original and most of the articles are written in a playful

new media style. In the comments section, the author actively interacts with the messages, and is familiar with all kinds of online language, making him seem lively and friendly.

As a result, the public automatically substituted the image of " Shen Xiao Wei " for the image of the Shenzhen Health Care Commission as a government department, or even the image of the Shenzhen Municipal Government and the city of Shenzhen. Unlike the "authoritative, official, serious, decent and unquestionable" image conveyed by the government and official media in other Chinese cities, "Shen Xiao Wei" appears to be a refreshing stream, not only popular among Shenzhen citizens, but also reflecting the close interaction between the two. The close interaction between the two reflects the "grounded" and "youthful" character of the city.

5.4.2 Service-oriented government

During the epidemic, a member of the public left a message on the WeChat official account of the Shenzhen Health Care Commission, saying that her family member was pregnant and could not be admitted to hospital because of the delay in the nucleic acid test report. Within less than a minute, "Shen Xiao Wei" replied in the message section with a fiery, "Send me the phone number." After that, an hour and a half later, the report was issued to the pregnant woman, enabling her to be admitted to hospital in time. The incident drew the attention of the whole country and made "Shen Xiao Wei" a trending topic on Weibo again.

The Shenzhen Health Care Commission responded to the incident by saying "this is what a service-oriented government should do".

As early as 2000, a group of Chinese public management scholars pioneered the concept of service-oriented government and stressed the need for the government to change from a management-oriented government to a service-oriented government, making public services one of the core functions of the government.

In recent years, the construction of service-oriented government has increasingly emphasized more emphasis on "Internet + government services", highlighting the digital transformation of government and public service innovation. In particular, the extensive and in-depth application of new-generation information technology, such as big data and artificial intelligence, has led to more accurate and timely identification of the public service needs of the public and enterprises, and significant improvements in the coverage, accessibility, accuracy, customization and agility of public services.

However, in terms of the construction of service-oriented government, there are still major differences between places. For example, some cities did not

properly handle the relationship between epidemic prevention and people and epidemic prevention and life during epidemic prevention and control, resulting in difficult hospital admissions for pregnant women and critically ill patients, and causing bad social impacts. Judging from the response and behavior of the Shenzhen Health Care Commission, it does reflect the requirements of service-oriented government construction, i.e., emphasizing people as the center, adhering to the people's city for the people, effectively starting from the actual needs of the people and solving the urgent, difficult and worrying problems around the people.

The five simple words "Send me the phone number" once again won cheers and applause for "Shen Xiao Wei", and also branded Shenzhen as a "service-oriented government" within the national perspective, which is really A very successful marketing campaign for the city.

5.4.3 Governing with a human face

Due to the vast size of China and varying level of economic and cultural development across regions, hospitality and humanity have been uncommon governance approaches. As results, issues like "blocking public opinion channels", "one-size-fits-all governance" and "pursuing only economic figures" have occurred. In particular, during the epidemic, many places have experienced problems such as "destroying pets to stop the infection" and a lack of scientific guidance. On the other hand, a member of the public left a comment on a Shenzhen Health Care Commission article about his pet cat being trapped in a sealed office building, and received a response from the Shenzhen Health Care Commission's public website within five minutes. The following morning, exterminators came to the house and renewed sufficient food for the three cats. The incident once again aroused a lively public debate, with the public generally saying that the Shenzhen Health Care Commission protected the private property of citizens during the epidemic, "prioritizing the admission of pregnant women" and "arranging home care for pet cats", respecting and treating every life well, fully reflecting the government's This shows the "humanity" of the government's administration. Citizens' willingness to give up personal interests and remain at home in isolation to allow for public safety is based on their trust in the state and the government, a valuable tacit understanding that is not a divine mandate but the credibility of those in power.

6.Conclusions

The success or failure of urban marketing is related to the core competitiveness and sustainable development of cities. Local governments at all levels in China have realized the importance of urban marketing and actively started related activities, and some cities have achieved some success to a certain extent, but there are not many cases that are locally adapted, scientific, effective, and creative. Using the case of the Shenzhen Health Care Commission, this paper breaks down in detail how official media can play a role in urban marketing through social media, such as creating a pro-people image of the government; opening up public opinion channels, effectively uploading and transmitting information, understanding public opinion and giving timely feedback, making continuous improvements in practical work, and humanizing governance with the concept of service-oriented government, etc. The study of theories and different practices of city marketing can help provide a more comprehensive theoretical analysis framework for city managers in China to enhance city operations and thus improve city competitiveness to gain more economic benefits and space for development.

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